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## HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE OF KIANG.

## PREFACE.

AMONG the elements of progress of the present age, first and foremost stands "Yankee Enterprise." Self-laudation and boasting are vulgar habits unbecoming a gentleman and a scholar. Although a patriot to the back-bone, I dislike to hear people talk of the "Universal Yankee nation." No matter what they think, individuals should never maintain that they can whip their weight in wild cats, and outrun and outjump any man they come across. It is decidedly unbecoming a man of sensibility and good sense to brag that he is half man and half alligator, and can "lick" anybody in the twinkling of a bed-post, all of which confident assertions indicate the nature of "Yankee Enterprise." For the sake of truth, however, it must be confessed that if Yankee enterprise could be abstracted from the efforts of the civilized world, the said civilized world would be nowhere in the race towards perfection. From the latest machine that induces hens to lay eggs abundantly, to the laying of the Atlantic cable, "Yankee enterprise" leads the van of every great undertaking of the age. Our clippers are the fastest sailers in the world, and if our steamers break down occasionally, how, in the name of common sense, are we to determine their speed but by running them until they collapse! You cannot tell how fast a horse can go until you kill him. John Bull has been growing lately because we have monopolized too much of the credit of the Atlantic Telegraph, and did not sufficiently acknowledge that he had furnished most of the capital and the ships, and the men to work the machinery. That shows how little John Bull understands Yankee enterprise! We know the full value of the Atlantic telegraph, but we know also how many unsuccessful experiments are requisite in order to complete it, so we supply just money and assistance enough to induce neighbor John to carry on the experiments, after which we will buy Amsterdam of the Dutch, and lay down a cable across the Atlantic on our own account, and on our own ground.

But that is not what I was going to talk about. I intend to give the reader a bit of history concerning an enterprise of my own; and as I am a full-blooded Yankee (I was born in Rutland County, Vermont; my father was an Irishman, and my mother a Dutch woman), I felt the necessity of advancing a few words in behalf of Yankee enterprise in general, to show how worthy I was of national encouragement. To return to myself, however, which is the main object of this preface. Of course, dear readers, you must be aware that I am a literary man, otherwise I should not appear before you in a yellow cover and at a low price.\* But to disabuse your mind of any prejudice or error concerning myself, let me tell you that I am none of your bookworms who write because they are so chuck-full of

reading, that they have to give vent to it by way of letting off steam; nor do I write for *fame* or *posterity*, which is all humbug to a man of sense. I do not propose either to write simply for the *good* of the world; I have heard of such generosity and its invariable consequence—*ingratitude* and *neglect*. I write to *make something* out of it. I propose to gratify people's curiosity about things they *do not know of*, and really it is of no use to write about things they *do know of*, for they will either not read, or, if they do read, they will immediately assert that they know a great deal better;—if I gratify curiosity, I expect a solid compensation in lawful money of the United States, or its equivalent in pounds, francs, or guilders, I do not care which; and the moment the dear people stop the specie I shall immediately stop the intellectual supplies. There is nothing like a fair understanding at the outset. "Dear reader!" I say I will supply you with reading matter from motives of business—will you pay for it? and if so, how much? The reader may, perhaps, modestly inquire what reading matter I have to offer. In answer to that pertinent question, I open my preface as follows:

I am a literary man, a *Sylvanus Cobb*, in *facts*, but not in *fancies*. I draw for my materials upon history and not upon the imagination, which, to be sure, is nothing new, for others have done the same thing before me. But I think I can surpass them. "Egotism! conceit!" I hear you exclaim. Not a bit of it. That you may thoroughly understand me, I must advance a bit of philosophical reasoning—not at all in my way as a general thing—but I do it when I cannot help it.

History of all ages is instructive. We can learn to-day to imitate the virtues and avoid the vices of yesterday, as well as learn to do the same thing for the vices and virtues of one or ten centuries ago. History is always interesting—full of incident, wonderful and strange; nevertheless, our interest in the teaching of history magnifies in proportion as incidents recede from the eye. "Distance lends enchantment to the view." We accordingly enjoy upon our children to study Roman and Greek history, while we throw aside the newspaper containing the history of to-day, without condescending to store in our memory one single fact or draw one logical conclusion from the many suggestive ideas contained therein. Such philosophy does my observation teach me.

Now, at one time I had serious thoughts of undertaking the history of the day, but, on examination, I found that people did not care to read facts unless they were *sufficiently*, *yes*, *highly* colored in the peculiar hue of their own feelings; and that when they did read, the effect was lost at the termination of the article. Newspapers are read not to store the memory with facts to reflect upon, to draw conclusions from, or to make use of in any form whatever, but simply to gently agitate, or to tickle, if you please, for a few unoccupied moments, an overtasked or empty brain. Ancient and modern history, therefore, in the accepted meaning of the term, I concluded never would pay. It requires end-

\* When my history shall be completed it will be issued in book-form by "one of our eminent and enterprising publishing houses."

less research and study to make either pass muster with the fastidious and learned few who read, unless indeed you except some good hits made recently, such as a certain History of Napoleon—a very pleasant and remunerative undertaking, and others of a similar stamp.

Looking round in the historical market, I bethought me of the East. There were China and Japan, each a perfect mine of history, and I said to myself the man who could first enter that field would make a fortune in a very short time. Napoleon, the Wars of the Succession, the Reformation, the Crusades, the Fall of the Roman Empire, and the Hellenic War, furnish mere hackneyed material compared with the history of the East Indies and China—if I could only get hold of it.

Where an end to be obtained is so desirable, the means are readily found. My father—I believe I mentioned before that he was an Irishman—of course had considerable interest with the party in power. Letters from influential personages were readily procured, introducing me to a commodore then commanding an expedition destined for Japan. I stated my case, appealing to the commodore's "knowledge of human nature" to decide whether I was likely to be a useful member of such an expedition. The commodore had an extensive opinion of his "knowledge of human nature," and perceiving that I appreciated it, he at once declared me just the man he wanted. I received a commission as an extra sergeant of marines, with the understanding that I was to write a history of the expedition, subject, of course, to the revision of the commodore. Whether or not the said history has been published I really cannot say, as I have not seen any mention of it in the papers; but this I know, that as soon as my engagement with that expedition ended, and seeing no way to enter Japan, or get access to its literature, I attached myself to the suite of our minister extraordinary to China, who had recently arrived in that ancient country, and I set myself to work in the next best field.

I suppose that by this time every one in the United States knows the unparalleled success of the late negotiations with the Chinese Empire. While the Emperor of China was being pressed by the rebels on one side, and the joint fleet of the English and French on the other, our minister insinuated himself in a manner peculiar to the Yankee nation, into the affections of the somewhat nervous emperor, and thereby procured peaceably a treaty securing to the United States, and to her citizens, all privileges conferred upon the most favored nations. Of course, he got all he wanted,—and here I am in consequence of it sitting in the imperial library at Peking, between two learned mandarins, exploring the treasures of Chinese ancient history.

My speculation I think a superb one. If I can explore the ancient history of China in advance of anybody else, and can give it to the American public in good American English, it must prove a Yankee enterprise unparalleled in literary boldness of conception, and unsurpassed in pecuniary success. Immediately upon the signing of the treaty

granting America the privilege of travelling in China, I went to Peking, and engaged, at an enormous expense, the services of the only two mandarins that were procurable in the empire. One of these was intimately acquainted with the catalogue of the library, a study requiring a lifetime to complete; and the other with the ancient languages and dialects of the country, both to assist me in selecting and translating Chinese history into English. Mandarin No. 1 of the catalogue, naively asked what period I should like to examine first. He explained to me that there were four periods which I might study; the first, from anno 1 to 6,000; the second, from anno 6,000 to 10,000; the third, from anno 10,000 to 15,000; and the fourth, from anno 15,000 to the present day.

"How long will it take you to give me a synopsis of the principal headings of the first period?" I inquired.

"By condensing and with assistance it would take about five years and six months," coolly replied our mandarin.

"My most respected and learned friend," I responded, "five and a half years is a period that amounts to nothing compared with the history of a nation 16,000 years old, but it is a very long time in Yankee land—time enough to make a fortune and lose it again. We must manage to proceed differently. What is the most interesting part of the history of the first period?"

"That question," said my mandarin, "I can answer instantly, if you will pay me a round price for my answer, for it took me twenty years of my life to obtain the information you want."

We agreed upon the price; I paid the cash down, and the mandarin handed me, an hour afterwards, a sealed envelope, containing a sheet of letter paper, stamped with a row of the most wonderful characters printed in line from top to bottom. I at once appealed to mandarin No. 2 to translate this document into ordinary Chinese, and then to my interpreter to translate his translation into English. He finally made out the following title:

*History of the Empire of Kiang, beginning with the year 5,770 to the year 5,920, in 83 volumes, published by order of the Emperor, Cho-Fo, by the 34th battalion of learned mandarins, in the year 6,574.*

"Can you," I again inquired of mandarin No. 1, "give me the principal headings of the said history in as condensed a form as possible?"

"I can," replied my mandarin. There is in volumes 1 to 10 the Settling of Kiang by the Chinese from the South; volumes 10 to 25 describe the War of Independence, and the Establishment of the Republic of Kiang; volumes 25 to 43 contain the Republic of Kiang and its progress; volumes 43 to 65 relate the history of the rise and progress of the new form of government called the Monocracy of Kiang; and volumes 65 to 83 set forth the Downfall and Conquest of the Republic of Kiang."

There I had it before me in a voluminous and comprehensive shape. My next question was how to condense it, and pick out the best part for the American public in a

reasonably short time. I again appealed to my mandarins. This time they held a consultation, lasting about five hours, which time they spent sipping tea and wagging their queues, now and then uttering short sentences in genuine Chinese falsetto. The upshot of it was, that by engaging about twenty to thirty-five translating, reading, condensing, compiling, erasing, correcting, comparing, and approving mandarins at a ruinous rate, I found that I could get off a monthly article of about three quarto pages of two columns each, provided it is printed in moderately large type. To save time, therefore, I acquiesced in the above arrangement, and next month I shall send the first installment of the History of Kiang to follow this the preface to what I consider to be a novel and curious history.

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 "AS THE LOVE, SO IS THE LIFE."

As the love is, so is life.

Lovest thou the Beautiful?

Earthly roads are filled with strife;

Earthly skies are grey and dull.

To the Beautiful awake,

Thou shalt walk in sheltered ways,

Seeing through the cloud-roof break

Heaven's all-glorifying rays.

As the love is, so is life.

Dost thou truly seek the True?

Error is a fatal knife

Cutting every heaven-link through.

Truth is noble, falsehood mean;

Thine the choice to crawl or fly.

Shut out self, and live serene

In the sunshine of her eye.

As the love is, so is life.

Art thou wedded to the Good?

Beauteous bride and faithful wife,

When her "Aye" was understood

Truth's deep heart was sealed to thine;

Beauty in to bless thee stole;

And the joy of the Divine

Is the hearth-light of thy soul.

— — —  
 LUCY LAROOM.

THE world at large has a deep sense of the virtue of honest substantiality in every exhibition that shall command their admiration. If a man makes a fine speech, which is felt to be only a curious procession of harmonious sounds, and not what it is meant to be, a true declaration of inward sentiment, the audience will not allow themselves to be cheated into admiration by such a mere phantasmagoria, any more than the palate will be pleased when the teeth have crushed a hollow nut; they may possibly make an applause noise with their hands and feet if the speaker occupies a commanding position, but they will whisper secretly—*humbug!*—*J. S. Blackie.*

To gain a correct acquaintance with human nature, it is not necessary to move in a public or extensive sphere. A more limited circle of observation conduces to greater minuteness and accuracy. A public mode of life is favorable to a knowledge of manners; a private, to a knowledge of character.—*Chulow.*

THE POOR ARTIST;

OR,

SEVEN EYESIGHTS AND ONE OBJECT.

THE bestowing of guineas by the uncle was nothing more than charity, for the old gentleman set no value upon the greenhouse paintings which the artist had painted for grandma. He considered that the Poor Artist might be subjected for a few days to the cravings of hunger and thirst, and as such a misfortune would be a very disagreeable circumstance to him, he got rid of the thought of it by parting with a little money. Moreover, he viewed the matter in this light: being somewhat of an abstract thinker, or as he declared himself a philosopher, he considered that the Poor Artist, in laboring for his relatives, had disturbed the natural equilibrium of social intercourse, and it was no more than proper that the disturbance should be remedied, and this in harmony with well-known principles of political economy. He accordingly made the matter straight in his mind by passing over to the work man, wages and profits in the shape of lawful currency. The young fellow could expect nothing more, and he ought to be satisfied. And so far as the uncle was concerned, the Poor Artist undoubtedly was satisfied. Being a natural philosopher, and never at the court of worldly wisdom, he lived upon spiritual wealth, a kind of wealth of which there was no mention in the uncle's system of political economy.

Now the artist had that which he prized more than the uncle's money. Aurelia had given him a keepsake—a volume of *La Fontaine's Fables*. With this symbol of affection, and with lively hopes, he betook himself to a beautiful part of the country, where, with "all creation" for a studio, and a lodging at a farmer's house, he began to paint. Misfortune and disappointment, however, followed him to this Eden. The farmer's house took fire during his absence, and the fire consumed not only the poor farmer's dwelling, but all the Poor Artist's castles in the air; it destroyed five perfectly successful works of art, such as the world never saw before, and such as could not possibly be painted again. His hopes of fame and of Aurelia vanished, as he stood before the ruins of the farm-house, and gazed upon the ashes of his pictures, with eyes following the light flakes of cinders as they drifted away on the wind.

But life is life, and the world-struggles must be gone through. So he took leave of the burnt-out farmer, and his wife and children, all of them shedding tears, and hoping to meet again some day, here or in heaven.

When he got into the wood he sat down. He unpacked his sketching-box, laid a piece of canvas before him, looked at his colors and palette, then at his brushes, then at the peeps of landscape in front of him. But he gave it up with a deep sigh, and two or three scalding tears trickled down his cheek. He could not work.

Finding himself so depressed, he took out the dear little volume of *La Fontaine's Fables* from his pocket, kissed it devoutly, and began to read. He read on, and at last began to